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November, 1951 No. 3

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II. A Report on the Communist World Youth Festival, Berlin, August, 1951

III. The Sermons of Metropolitan Nikolay

IV. Notes on New Developments in the Church Situation in China

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REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN THE BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Government has imposed restrictions on the Church which have been presented not as orders given by the Government, but by the Church itself. The tendency of the Communist policy towards the Church is clear: to forbid Christian teaching among youth, to create conditions of hostility towards the faithful and the church workers, and to compromise the church leaders. In other words, the Communist Party sought to create conditions in which the Church will obliterate itself. This policy of slow liquidation of the Church has been revealed in the struggle with the church leaders, in the preparation of the newly-enacted statutes for the governing of the Church, and in the dictated policy of relations of the Bulgarian Church towards the churches of the free world.

1. The fate of the Church Leaders

In the days after the Communist seizure of the Government on September 9th, 1944, hundreds of priests were killed, sometimes most cruelly, and without the semblance of a trial. Others were arrested and held for long periods in jails, where they endured persecution and humiliations. Church leaders who were not imprisoned or killed, and who have remained faithful to the Church, have been subjected to pressure, including the threat of assassination, to force them either to resign their posts or to accept the Government's policy.

By manipulating the church elections, the Government soon exercised power in the supreme government of the Church. After September 9th, Bishop Stefan was made Chairman of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. He "resigned" from this office in 1948, though it has never been made clear just why he did so. Though he was also Bishop of the Diocese of Sofia, he was forced out of that city on December 20th, 1948, when he was taken in a police car to Barria, a village near Karlovo. He is, presumably, still there, watched by the militia and forbidden to have any connections with church or other circles. Later, rumours against him were spread: that he embezzled funds, that he was a spy, etc. Perhaps the true cause for his removal can be deduced from a declaration of the former Director of Cults, Dimiter Iliev, made in 1948. He stated: "After the resignation of Exarch Stefan I, the relations between the Government and the Church were soon improved. I have just received a statement from the Holy Synod that it has decided to stop the religious education of children, the group visits to Rila Monastery, etc. Priests should not bother about their salaries. The Government will take care of the support of the Church".

Since then various churchmen have served as head of the Holy Synod for longer or shorter periods, only to "resign" abruptly. At the end of 1950, Plovdiv Bishop Kiril was elected.

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Since then various churchmen have served as head of the Holy Synod for longer or shorter periods, only to "resign" abruptly. At the end of 1950, Plovdiv Bishop Kiril was elected.

Meanwhile it is feared that the Government is preparing the way for its own man to become the leader of the Church. He is an agent of the Government, who has strongly criticised the church leadership through his articles in the newspaper of the Clergymen's Union. If he comes to power the last shred of independence of the Church would be liquidated.

Many church leaders have remained loyal and publicly criticise Government policy with regard to the Church. Some have even paid for their courage with their lives. Meanwhile the great pressure on the leadership continues. The authority of the Synodal Metropolitans was publicly attacked by the Communist leader, Prime Minister George Dimitrov, who called them "old men with bony brains". That happened at a dinner party in the Rila Monastery in the presence of the Russian Patriarch Alexei.

In January 1951 the Government confiscated the cars of all Metropolitans under the pretext that they were needed for the national economy.

In 1949 the Government turned its attention to the office of Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod. It obtained the resignation of Archimandrite Simeon and eventually succeeded in forcing upon the Holy Synod the candidate Archimandrite Iona. He is more than anybody else in the Church favoured by the Government, and he completely responds to their favours. In 1950 the only Bulgarian cleric admitted to the Sheffield Congress of the World Peace Council was Archimandrite Iona. As Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod he is able to supply the Government with detailed information about Church problems.

Besides the Holy Synod, an important factor in the life of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the Clergymen's Union. This Union was also seized by the Communists, and in it they created a Committee for reforms in the Church.

In 1947, against the wishes of the majority of members, the Rev. George Bogdanov Georgiev became the head of the Union. Under his leadership the Union has become a vigorous proponent for Communist views in the Church. Upon the request of the Union, all "Arhiereisky Namestnitzi" (chiefs of sub-divisions of dioceses) were replaced by new men loyal to him. All clergymen were obliged to serve two months as "Crigadiri", i.e. as members of labour groups, in which they had to stand many hardships and humiliations. (Those who refused were threatened with dismissal and condemnation to concentration camps).

The Union is at present leading a fight with the Holy Synod on the question of the second marriage of clergymen-widowers. The Holy Synod points out that the question falls solely within the competence of the World Orthodox Church, and that it has not the right in Canon Law to make a decision. The Union also insists that the dress of priests be changed, while the Holy Synod is against it.

2. General Church Questions

(i) Judicial Statute of the Church

In the programme of the Communist Government of September 17th, 1944, it was stated that the Church would be separated from the State. This change in the relations between the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the State was effected by a

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Communist constitution introduced on December 4th, 1947, containing a section on the "Law of Cults". The Church leadership considered that the change was a blow against the Church, but they hoped that the new statute would at least permit the internal independenceoof the Church. Just the opposite has happened, for as a result of the new Law the Church's internal freedom is more endangered than ever. In the preparation of the "Law of Cults" the Holy Synod had demanded that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church should be recognised as a public corporation, but this was rejected and instead the religious life was proclaimed to be a private judicial function of the citizen, and religious organisations were placed under the control of the Direction of Cults at the Foreign Ministry. The head of that Ministry has openly intervened in the internal life of the Church by appointing the more important personnel, and it is feared that he is preparing a list of names for an eventual purge of the Church.

In a circular letter addressed to the Holy Synod, to the Clergymen's Union and to the Theological Faculty and the Church newspapers, the Director of Cults, Dimiter Iliev in 1949, advocated basic reforms in the Church: a purge of public enemies, a change in the programme of religious schools in a "progressive spirit", etc. The circular letter stirred up a strong commotion in church circles and there was danger of serious new tensions in the relations between State and Church. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was compelled to declare to the Holy Synod that the circular letter was a private affair of Iliev and that it did not implicate the Government in any way.

The "Law of Cults" also compelled the Holy Synod to present to the Government for approval a statute for the Government of the Church. A committee was formed consisting of representatives of the Holy Synod, a representative of the Clergymen's Union, and representatives of the Direction of Cults. In the work of the Committee there were frequent crises. These arose apparently in connection with Article 6 concerning the rights of the Holy Synod. The representatives of the Holy Synod defended its right of veto with regard to the actions of the planned Peoples' Church Congress.

The new statute, which came into force on January 1st 1951, has not yet been published, but it is known that it concerns the manner of elections to parish county councils for the Peoples' Church Congress, at which are to be elected the main governing body of the Church and, at last, a Patriarch.

The new statute for the governing of the Church has its followers and its opponents. Its followers are clergymen sympathetic to the Communist régime and supported by the Government. It is feared that at the elections the government will certainly put up people who are their agents. Thus the new Statute opens wide the door for unrestricted action on the part of the Communists who, until now, have been held in check by the Holy Synod, and their supporters. It must be remembered that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the only institution in which the Communists have not as yet succeeded in making a general purge. It is believed that the new statute will help them to do that. That is the reason why the bulk of the Church is against it, although the statute is in fact similar to the one drawn up in 1870. There is not as yet, however, any open fight because circumstances do not permit it.

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The Director of Cults is undoubtedly very clever in favouring the election of a new Bulgarian Patriarch. While it is presented as a pure act of benevolence and an achievement of the Government in favour of the Church, and indeed answers to the feeling of the Church and of religious circles at the moment, it is suspected that the true object of the Government is to make the Bulgarian Church canonically equal to the remaining Orthodox Churches and thus to be in a position to add it to the bloc of Orthodox Churches organised by Patriarch Alexei in Moscow. There is naturally considerable speculation about the person who will be the next Patriarch. Metropolitan Kiril, who has the best chance, has publicly declared several times that he is going to refuse. In theological circles and among the population, the conviction that the Government is going to nominate the new Patriarch is very widespread.

(ii) Financial Organisation of the Church

After the separation of the Church from the State, the Holy Synod presented a plan for the financial support of the Church to the Government, for approval. The project included the creation of a Church Bank, whose funds would be collected from the income of the Church properties and the sale of special welfare stamps distributed among believers - something like a voluntary church tax. The Government flatly refused, probably because it feared the financial independence of the Church would reduce the possibilities of interfering in its internal affairs, and also probably because it feared that this financial plan would create a popular movement in support of the Church.

Instead, the Government promised to make an annual allowance for the financial support of the Church. Later, in connection with this allowance, constant pressure was put on the Church, and when the relations between Church and State became strained, the latter suspended the money allowance. Thus in 1948, during the months of January, February and March, the Church had no funds whatsoever. Then an allowance for only six months was given, and after that for another three months, and after the resignation of Exarch Stefan I, for the remainder of the year. The Holy Synod and the Government have been in conflict regarding the education of children, the visiting of monasteries, the Sofia Theological Seminary, etc. and through financial pressure the resistance of the Church has been gradually undermined.

(iii) The Fate of the Educational Institutions of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church

(a) Theological Faculty

Talk about the separation of the Theological Faculty from the University was widespread, directly after the seizure of the Government, but it was not until 1947 that Parliament passed a Law dealing with problems of university education, containing a provision separating the theological faculty from the university. However, church members from both the left and the right wings strenuously objected and George Dimitrov gave an order to the Parliament Committee: "Because of important state reasons, the Theological Faculty should remain attached to the University of Sofia". At the second reading of the Bill a change in the text was accepted, permitting the faculty to remain attached to the University.

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At the beginning of 1949 the Government demanded the expulsion of twenty theological students. The Faculty Council protested, though they were told that this might have fatal results for the whole Faculty. In 1950 the National Assembly suddenly passed a Law containing a single article: the separation of the Theological Faculty from the University. There was some support for this, because the interference of the Communists in the Faculty had become very daring. In 1948 and 1949 there was a danger that the Theological Faculty might be without any students, because the new candidates had to have permission for enrolment from the local Communist authorities. The latter refused to give such permission.

The conditions for scientific work are very unfavourable, especially with regard to the publication of philosophic and popular theological works. Until 1948 there was in the Faculty a Students' Orthodox Christian Society, which organised religious lectures by theological professors for students and citizens. In 1948 the militia forbade these lectures.

(b) Sofia Theological Seminary

The premises of the Seminary were occupied by Russian troops and left in a semi-destroyed condition in 1947. On September 11th, 1950, the Seminary received an ultimatum to remove within three days all movables to the Cherepish Monastery The students were given permanent leave and told to register in whatever Gymnasium they liked. This was a heavy blow to the Church.

(c) Plovdiv Theological Seminary

After the coup d'état the Communists occupied the seminary and turned it into a barracks. Later on the Government made it into an agricultural school, and in 1948 it became a school for physical culture. Meanwhile the Government has repeatedly promised to return the premises to the seminary. Until December 1947 the seminary occupied a wing of the Bachkovo Monastery, but in that year a fire, due to unknown causes, destroyed the wing occupied by the seminary. In the fire one of the richest Church libraries in Bulgaria was destroyed. In 1950 the seminary was closed.

(d) The Theological Institute for Priests

By a decree of the Government in 1950, this Institute which was a theological school in the Cherepish Monastery was closed.

(e) Priests' School

This school was closed in 1950. Its rector was found dead in his room in February of the same year.

In this way the educational policy of the Holy Synod has been checked. The Church now lacks schools for recruiting priests.

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(iv) Church Press

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(v) Missionary Activities

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church is deprived of the possibility to develop any welfare activities. All church welfare institutions are either closed or confiscated by the Government. Before 1944 there existed a well-developed "brotherhood movement", an Orthodox Christian Society for religious education and welfare. This has been stopped. The Law of Cults of 1948 forbade any religious preaching of Christianity among children. Organised Sunday-schools were closed down and the teachers, usually priests, were later sent to concentration camps. Religious propaganda among youth up to 18 years of age is considered as a crime.

(vi) Liturgical Activities

The liturgical activities of the priests are handicapped in different ways. No materials are allowed for repairing old churches nor for building new ones. Very often the Church is the object of anti-religious deeds, and services are frequently interrupted or forbidden and cancelled.

Easter 1951 was a working day. Special attention was paid to the sermons. Priests are obliged to use the pulpit as a political dais for explaining governmental policy. Following the Communist claim that the building-up of socialism means the realisation of the kingdom of God on earth, instructions are given by the Director of Cults to the administrative President of the Holy Synod and to the Chairman of the Clergymen's Council, who themselves give instructions to the priests to speak about collective farms, peace, spring and autumn sowing, volunteering for state labour schemes, etc. Sermons are listened to by agents of the police. In 1947 an Archimandrite in one of his speeches strongly criticised the Communist view of a woman's place in society, and explained the Christian view. A campaign against him was started in the local newspaper and he was sent to a concentration camp. There are even instances where fervent preaching of Christianity has resulted in arrest and imprisonment. To be religious is considered equivalent to being a political enemy of the régime.

The monasteries are in a very bad state. In some cases their movables have been confiscated and the monks are shadowed by Communist agents, while some of the monasteries have been confiscated for various purposes. For example the Buhovo monastery is now a military barracks and the monks have been forced to leave.

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3. The Relations of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church with other Churches

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church is, of course, not free to define its relations with the churches of the free world nor to have negotiations nor relations with them. At the Moscow Council of the Orthodox Churches in 1948, both the World Council of Churches and the Vatican were condemned and the bloc of Eastern Orthodox Churches under Communist leadership was founded. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church has its representative in Moscow. Until 1950 Archimandrite Methody was this representative, but he has been withdrawn, and in his place is Archimandrite Maxim.

Russian clergy are not considered trustworthy by Bulgarian church circles. When the Patriarch Alexei visited Bulgaria in 1946 many studied his face, suspecting that it was the face of an actor from the Bolshoy theatre impersonating the Patriarch. Although this was not the case, it shows the general lack of confidence in Communist policy towards the Church. During his visit to the Bachkovo Monastery in 1945, the Crutitzky and Colomensky Metropolitan Nikolay was constantly followed by a Russian Archimandrite who was always silent, but who never left the Bishop to speak alone with Bulgarian clergymen. It was widely believed that he was an agent of the Bolsheviks.

The World Council of Churches has a great authority in the Bulgarian Church community. The experience of Communism has, if anything, strengthened the desire for international Christian solidarity. A result of this is the new collaboration between Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic clergymen. Since 1947 contact between Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic youth has been established. There have also been reciprocal visits to religious services. This collaboration is carried out in the provinces also.

The prestige of the World Council of Churches and the interest in it grew as a result of the help that it offered to the Bulgarian Church in 1947, in the form of cloth for priests' robes and paper for printing. Today the Church stands in great need of material such as cloth for dresses, wax and paraffin for candles, and especially paper for printing.

Twice as urgent is the need for scientific and theological literature for the Theology School. Torn away from the free world, the Bulgarian scholars have a very great interest in the progress of scientific studies.

However, it is possible to say that the greatest help that the World Council can offer to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the moral support of its member-churches. The Bulgarian Church and the great bulk of the people are anxious to hear statements in their defence. Compelled daily to vote for resolutions to the United Nations Organisations which are against their principles and contrary to the facts, to collect signatures for declarations which they know are reprehensible, they greatly appreciate the moral support provided by their fellow-Christians in the free world, who believe in their loyalty to the faith and understand their loathing of the deeds which they are made to perform as the victims of Communist power.

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3. The Relations of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church with other Churches

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church is, of course, not free to define its relations with the churches of the free world nor to have negotiations nor relations with them. At the Moscow Council of the Orthodox Churches in 1948, both the World Council of Churches and the Vatican were condemned and the bloc of Eastern Orthodox Churches under Communist leadership was founded. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church has its representative in Moscow. Until 1950 Archimandrite Methody was this representative, but he has been withdrawn, and in his place is Archimandrite Maxim.

Russian clergy are not considered trustworthy by Bulgarian church circles. When the Patriarch Alexei visited Bulgaria in 1946 many studied his face, suspecting that it was the face of an actor from the Bolshoy theatre impersonating the Patriarch. Although this was not the case, it shows the general lack of confidence in Communist policy towards the Church. During his visit to the Rachkovo Monastery in 1945, the Crutitsky and Colomensky Metropolitan Nikolay was constantly followed by a Russian Archimandrite who was always silent, but who never left the Bishop to speak alone with Bulgarian clergymen. It was widely believed that he was an agent of the Bolsheviks.

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II.

A REPORT ON THE COMMUNIST WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL, BERLIN, AUGUST, 1951

The festival was far larger and more meaningfull than the press of the West made it appear. (One exception, was the Manchester Guardian which was praised therefore in the Eastpress). Two million young people, 20,000 foreigners from 100 countries were present. The festival was very well organised and there were some good cultural performances, exhibitions, national programmes, etc. The atmosphere in East-Berlin in general was one of enthusiasm and youthful pleasure.

The emphasis of the organisers was on demonstration and therefore the accent did not fall at all on the camp-life but on the street life. The Soviet-Stalin-Kult was evident much more than at Whitsun 1950 (e.g. at the end of the largest demonstration a zeppelin flew over the Marx-Engels-Platz with a huge picture under it of Stalin in floodlight and hatred of the U.S.A. on the other side). The two slogans: Es lebe Stalin (or: Deutsche Jugend lerne von der Sovietunion. Von der Sovietunion lernen, heisst siegen lerne) and Ami go home.

There were five different grades of care and treatment for the participants: (a) first-class foreigners, (b) second-class foreigners, (c) West Germans, (d) functionaries and sportspeople from East Germany, (e) normal East Germans- by far the majority. The first 4 groups stayed the whole time of the fortnight in Berlin. The last group was divided into 3 groups of 4 days each. The demonstration by about 4,000 East German Youth, who were ordered to go into West-Berlin to make a peace rally there, happened on the leave-day of the second and the arrival-day of the third group. Did the organisers have that in mind from the very beginning and did it mean that the tactics had changed since Whitsun '50 into open provocation? The impression was more that it was done because many more East Germans went to West Berlin and came back impressed than was expected; being thrown out by the Western police in a rough way seemed the best way to let them see the "dark" side of the West, and give the East German Youth themselves the martyrcrown. This was the line of the East press to a large extent.

The foreigners had a good time and were well looked after. They were kept apart as delegations and had some very good and often sympathetic East German Youth functionaries as guides. The performances and the tribunes during the parades were mainly for the benefit of the foreign delegations. There was a distinction made between people from the Soviet-countries (Korea!) and the Far East (all coloured people) on the one side, and "normal" foreigners on the other side. For example, the Indonesian delegation (15 from Holland, 80 from Indonesia) had their meals in the House of the Sovietculture, the best place in East-Berlin. The delegation from one of the European countries numbering over 300 persons had good care in a school. Not one of them came the normal way. Some came via Denmark, Sweden-Finland or via Vienna-Prague; after the difficulties of these journeys they were thrilled by the warm German welcome.

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They were all more or less convinced communists and left the place more convinced than before. This, I think, must be the case with most of the foreigners (e.g. 4,000 French). Some of them may have seen also the other side of the picture, as for example some French, Swiss, British and Danish students who were partly Student Christian Movement members and with whom discussions were held in East Berlin, but in general these delegations went back as small groups of missionaries of Soviet Communism.

The fifth group, the normal FDJ-ers (Free German Youth, Communist youth organisation) and other young people from the East zone, lived in large camps around Berlin and had a much less favourable treatment. There was promiscuity, partly voluntary, partly forced. Only a few could go to the performances (for example 15 entrance tickets for a camp of 5,000) and so they walked through East and West Berlin, unorganised. There were many members from Junge Gemeinde and Studentengemeinde in this group. This group as a whole was surely not enthusiastic and convinced, but still there was a parade of nearly a million of them on the second Sunday, singing and calling their slogans. As a group it is a power. How far can this passiveness go, if "well" used?

About half a million (some estimates go as high as a million) East Germans have been in West Berlin during these days, some privately but the largest part took the meals offered by youth and studenthomes and saw the "good" films to which they could go without money. The West Berlin and allied bodies did a lot, not, though, without propaganda from their side. RIAS, the American sponsored Radio station for broadcasts to East Germany, had 10,000 visitors, who got in in groups, were given coca-cola and could ask questions. The Kampfgruppe, the West German movement for resistance in the Eastern Zone, had some anti-propaganda meetings in the Titaniapalast. Negative were the pamphlets thrown out over East Berlin by the Bund Deutscher Jugend, showing red rats in a trap. Very negative were the travel-difficulties made by West Germany and most of the Western countries, giving delegates the feeling of martyrs and showing the East Berlin situation in a better light.

It was difficult for the Church to find her own way between the progressive pastors from the East, some of whom tried to make an arrangement for the religious side of the festival with the Church government, without success, and the Kampfgruppementality in West Berlin. Also people were tired from the Kirchentag and the best among youth leaders, students and so on were on holiday. There were the Sunday services, morning- and evening prayers in the East churches, especially the Marienkirche, a youth conference in the Haus der Kirche, with a few festival visitors. There were the discussions in the East-students home near the Marienkirche with practically only foreigners (some 30). Seeing the difficulties, the Church as a whole and each Parish member could have taken the challenges and possibilities of this meeting more seriously. At the same time the character of the Kirchentag, of a community-experience and not of a mass-meeting, came out still more clearly after this festival.

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III.

THE SERMONS OF METROPOLITAN NIKOLAY

In the year 1947 a volume of Russian Orthodox sermons by Metropolitan Nikolay was published in Moscow (The Metropolitan Nikolay: Sermons, Speeches, and Pastoral Letters, 255 pages). The Metropolitan Nikolay holds the second highest position in the Church, the highest being held by Patriarch Alexei. While the speeches are often highly political, the sermons do not deal with politics and do not mention Stalin at all and Russia only a few times. The monthly organ of the Russian Church was started in September, 1943, when Stalin came to an agreement with the Church. Since November, 1944, almost every issue of the "Journal" has contained a sermon by the Metropolitan Nikolay. It is especially noteworthy that Nikolay preaches un-political sermons as he, more than any other, is the political figure of the Church. In 1942 he became a member of "The Commission of the State for investigation of German cruelties", and in recent years he has been the main spokesman for the Church at many peace conferences: he has, for example, spoken about the "satanic hatred" of the Western countries which "work for war".

A survey of the 73 sermons which have been printed up to June 1951, indicates that a large number of these might have been preached in a Protestant Church outside Russia. In connection with the last war-time Christmas the Metropolitan Nikolay spoke on "peace" as follows: "Where is the peace which the Lord left for us on earth when kingdom rises against kingdom and people against people? .... Let us imagine the most terrible storm on the open ocean. The waves rise one above another to such a height that they hide the horizon. And it seems as if all the water, down to the very depths of the ocean, is set in motion by this hurricane. But this is only an illusion, for it is, in fact, only the surface of the ocean that is so rough, and not far below the surface begins the kingdom of continual rest and silence which the trembling or the roar of such a hurricane can never reach ..... The peace which our Saviour gave to mankind is above all peace with God, it is the peace of the soul which has given itself up to God and loves Him. It lives in the heart which does not complain against God, the heart which takes all that happens from the hands of God ..... This peace cannot live in the soul when a man light-heartedly surrenders to sin and sings his conscience to sleep. He does not repent of his sin but thinks that God according to His Grace forgives all and does not condemn anything." (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, 1945, 1).

Another sermon deals with the peace of the heart. "A peaceful and blessed death does not depend on external conditions, but on internal peace and a clear conscience. When a very old man dies, his death may be the end of an illness and the weakness of his old age, but he will die a terrible death if his conscience is burdened with heavy sins which worried him before he died. When a young lad or a young girl dies, when their lives are just beginning, they die in rest and peace if in their short lives on earth they lived with Christ in their hearts". (1949,5).

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These sermons speak in a common Christian way about the sin of man and the peace of man. In the same way they speak of the work of Christ although we usually say that the Orthodox Church is more interested in the incarnation and resurrection of Christ than in his death, these sermons deal equally with redemption through Christ: "He came to earth to be a redemptive sacrifice for the sins of the whole world before the righteous judgment of God in order to bring back to men the mercy and favour of our Heavenly Father which they lost after the fall of Adam, to destroy the wall between men and God which was formed by the sins of men" (1946, 11). "He took on Himself the whole weight and abomination of our sins in order to suffer for them on the cross of Golgotha, and by these sufferings and that death to give every repenting sinner forgiveness" (1947,5). One sermon deals with the doctrine of atonement . "God did not create evil, sin and misfortune. All the distress and illness of man came into his life because of sin when the first man violated the will of God ..... Every transgression will be punished - it is the law of justice ..... But who among us, who carry so many sins, could carry the punishment which they deserve? ....In the counsel of God it was decided to send the Son of God to earth in order that He might assume the soul and body of man, take on Himself the sins of all men, and by the sufferings on Golgotha accomplish the salvation of mankind" (1946, 12).

The sermons speak often of the resurrection of Christ. "All that we have in life as Orthodox believers, the most valuable and the most treasured, all is given to us by the power of the Resurrection of Christ, for our whole faith stands - as on a rock - on this miracle, so solemnly and mightily praised by the Church" (1950, 4). The "Bright Resurrection of Christ" is naturally called the greatest feast of the Church.

The sermons also speak in a common Christian way of the kingdom of God. They do not give materialism any place in the life of man. They often preach that we shall love our neighbour, though as might be expected the sermons do not deal with social problems. In a manner characteristic of Orthodox theology there is primary emphasis on the otherworldly nature of the kingdom of God: "If a man in his heart has gained the kingdom of God, he has all, even if he has no earthly goods: if he has not found the kingdom of God, he has nothing, even if he has all the innumerable goods of the world" (1947, 9). "Here is not our native land. Our native land is there, in Heaven, in our Heavenly Father's House" (1950, 8).

A great deal is said about death. Life on earth is of no importance in itself, but is only a preparation for ever-lasting life. Suffering is also greatly stressed, more than is usual in preaching in the West. But the preacher does not speak of compassion or pity for sufferers, because all sufferings are sent by God. "If a man is surrounded by hardships, sorrows, losses, and illness, he must always remember that nothing happens in his life without the will of God. The believer knows that God visits him with illness and trials in order that through them He may bring him nearer to Himself, that he with patience can endure the sorrows and become still more united with God" (1950, 11).

As evidenced by the preceding quotations, these sermons are pietistic. They often tell men to forsake the world and prepare themselves for the last judgment of God, because he will send them either to destruction or to

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These sermons speak of the inability of man to gain salvation, but they also speak - as does the Roman Catholic Church - of the ability of man to become good. On one hand man is so weak that he is not even able to repent. "Open, O Lord, the door of repentance for me ..... It is easy to imagine a traveller who is surprised by a snowstorm on a winter night ..... The storm blinds his eyes, and his feet sink into the deep snow. With difficulty he finds the house he strives to reach. He goes up to the house, but his frozen hands cannot open the door ..... He knocks and cries, "Open the door, for I am almost frozen". The door is opened for him, he enters, and finds warmth and rest". So it is for the repentant sinner (1946, 4). (The same view of repentance is given in a sermon delivered in 1951, 4).

On the other hand the evangelical sects are attacked (the sermons are otherwise never polemical) on account of their "mendacious doctrine" that faith is enough: "Believe in God and you are already saved. But we know that the kingdom of God is gained by the work of man ..... A Christian must during his whole life fight in his heart against this second sinful nature ..... He is helped by his faith and the grace of God" (1947, 9). Man can be sanctified, "With the help of the grace of God man is able to reach the highest holiness" (1945, 11). In a sermon on "faith and works" the Word from the Epistle of St. James (2, 14) is emphasized, "What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works?" (1950,9).

The Church is, of course, more stressed than is general in Protestant sermons. "We experience Christ in the highest degree when we meet him in the Church. We honour the holy icons, we kiss them with faith and devotion, and by this glorification of our holy relics we are participating in the grace of God which is conveyed through them. We bow our heads during the anointing with holy oil, "We are sprinkled with holy water", we kiss the blessed bread during the vigil, - and through all these holy rites we are given the benediction of our Heavenly Father" (1947,3). The sermons often deal with the sacraments of the Church, the Baptism, the Communion, and perhaps mostly the Penance. The Eucharist is of great importance also for the deceased (1951, 5).

These sermons differ mostly from Protestant sermons by frequent references to the Virgin Mary, though they speak much more of Christ than of the Virgin. "Pointing at His beloved disciple He says unto Her, "Woman, behold Thy son!" .... He declares Her to be the Mother of His disciple and (in his person) Mother of all mankind: "Do not weep, My Mother. I console You and make You Mother of all human beings. I hand over to You, to Your love, all mankind who is redeemed by My blood" ..... And every believing soul knows well that in Her is consolation for every sorrowful heart, that there is Motherly surety and intercession through Her Son for every man who weeps over his sins. Manifold are these manifestations of the mercy of the Mother of God through Her innumerable miraculous icons" (1946, 11).

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The Church is, of course, more stressed than is general in Protestant sermons. "We experience Christ in the highest degree when we meet him in the Church. We honour the holy icons, we kiss them with faith and devotion, and by this glorification of our holy relics we are participating in the grace of God which is conveyed through them. We bow our heads during the anointing with holy oil, "We are sprinkled with holy water", we kiss the blessed bread during the vigil, - and through all these holy rites we are given the benediction of our Heavenly Father" (1947,3). The sermons often deal with the sacraments of the Church, the Baptism, the Communion, and perhaps mostly the Penance. The Eucharist is of great importance also for the deceased (1951, 5).

These sermons differ mostly from Protestant sermons by frequent references to the Virgin Mary, though they speak much more of Christ than of the Virgin. "Pointing at His beloved disciple He says unto Her, "Woman, behold Thy son!" .... He declares Her to be the Mother of His disciple and (in his person) Mother of all mankind: "Do not weep, My Mother. I console You and make You Mother of all human beings. I hand over to You, to Your love, all mankind who is redeemed by My blood" ..... And every believing soul knows well that in Her is consolation for every sorrowful heart, that there is Motherly surety and intercession through Her Son for every man who weeps over his sins. Manifold are these manifestations of the mercy of the Mother of God through Her innumerable miraculous icons" (1946, 11).

There are many references to the saints, and we are told of the lives of some of them "He surrounded us with a great number of heavenly helpers and intercessors, and we do not only admire the saints, we do not only imitate their lives and deeds, but we also ask for their blessings and their support in our lives" (1946, 12).

It is not possible in this short survey to compare these sermons with those which were preached in Russia before the revolution. But Russian Orthodox priests (both those of the Moscow Patriarchate and some from the Orthodox Church outside Russia agree that although they do not contain especially original thoughts these sermons are both good and Orthodox. Almost all the sermons were given in different churches in Moscow.

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IV.

NOTES ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CHURCH SITUATION IN CHINA

(For an interpretation of events in China we advise our readers to see the article "The Situation of the Christian Church in China: An Attempt at Understanding" in the "Ecumenical Review" No. IV dated October 1951/No.1)

General Conditions.

Glowing reports come from inside China on progress in flood prevention, development of transportation on land and on water, promotion of cotton growing, increase in coal, iron, and steel production in Central and North China. A million men were employed for months on one flood control project in the Huai River area. As regards standard of living, there is some evidence that the level has been maintained in the city at the expense of the country. Land reform has now taken place in most areas. The immediate reaction has been on the whole favourable. Taxes of 25 to 35% of the annual crop yield are, however, taking the place of the former rentals. In addition "voluntary" subscriptions for the purchase of arms have been a heavy burden. Wide-spread executions continue. One province has published a list of 70,000 executed. Some newsmen believe that the total for the country would run into seven figures. The Confucian classics are no longer to be taught, and a language reform that would make Chinese characters obsolete is being pushed (probably Latinhua).

News of the Churches.

Programmes of church work carry on much as before, with good attendance being maintained in the cities. Curtailment of religious freedom so far consists in cutting off some church activities, sermon censoring in some places, a trend to forbid active evangelism outside the church buildings, and increased restrictions upon travel and pastoral visiting.

Institutional Work.

Most middle schools have been taken over by the Government. Universities and hospitals are also in process of being taken over, though not as yet so completely as the middle schools. Some orphanages and schools for the blind have been placed under the Government Board of Charity.

Intensification of the Accusation Campaign.

"Tien Feng" for August 11th has a significant article urging intensification of the "Accusation Movement." It states that there have been 63 accusation meetings held in Shanghai and other big cities, but that the movement is not going well in the smaller places, and that some are even saying, "We don't believe in it." The organization of branches of the Reform Movement Committee is then mentioned, and it is categorically stated that only after the Accusation Movement has been carried out in full can a local church be allowed to organize a branch. The statement culminates in the following official proclamation:

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To the Church in every Place and its Organizations:
Go slowly in setting up a Branch.

"Recently Christian churches and organizations in every section of the country have sent confused letters to our Committee requesting permission to set up a Branch of the Chinese Christian Oppose-America Aid-Korea and the Three-self Reform Movement Preparatory Committee (hereafter for brevity called a Branch). With regard to this request we counsel you as follows: The most important duty of the Church in China for the moment is to make a success of the Accusation Movement. Until the Accusation Movement has been made a success nothing else can be discussed and we cannot talk about establishing a Branch; so we want to inform your place to delay setting up a Branch and you ought, according to the summons of the preparatory Committee issued on August 6th, to CONTINUE AND INTENSIFY THE ACCUSATION MOVEMENT, and make a success of your Accusation Movement. When this has succeeded, and you have exposed every kind of crime of the American imperialists in controlling and using the Christian Church in the invasion of China, and, through your Accusation Movement you have exposed all the past and present imperialist elements and rotters within the Church, and distinguished between friends and enemies and have taken your stand firmly with the people, only then, on the foundation of this thinking, and when you have found out and cultivated in your movement many more active elements (communists), will you be able to take steps to start a Branch. For the present the most important task at your place is to CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND INTENSIFY THE ACCUSATION MOVEMENT."

(signed) The Preparatory Committee of the Resist-America Aid-Korea and the Three-Self Movements. August 6, 1951.

From the above article we may perhaps infer two things. (1) The campaign of hate in the Chinese Church is not going as well as leaders like Y. T. Wu had been hoping it would. (2) The organization of a "Branch" seems to be a highly desirable step, and some churches are trying to accomplish it without first conforming to the denunciation programme. Does the organization of a Branch secure to a local church some Government immunity denied to other churches or, still more radically, will the Branches, under the autocratic control of a central committee, take the place of the official church organization, thus securing indirectly and at one stroke the automatic unification of the whole church in China?

The fear that the Preparatory Committee of the Resist America Aid Korea Three-Self Movement is assuming a controlling position over the whole Protestant Christian Movement in China is supported by some statements in the following article which has been translated from the Sept. 8, 1951, issue of the Fellowship Bulletin of the National Committee for Christian Religious Education.

"Sweep the House Clean".

" It is more than twenty years since the National Committee for Christian Religious Education for China was established. From now on it is to develop

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a new page in its history, to climb a new step. This aim is right and worthy of support. Before it begins the new life it must sever its relations with imperialism and purge out all remaining influences thereof. If we cannot thoroughly accomplish these two things, we cannot talk at all about new life.

In our last issue we stated that the first thing to do is to break off relations with imperialism and now we come to the problem of 'sweeping clean our house'. In fact these two things are one and cannot be separated. We must sever the relations between the NCCRE and imperialism not only in finance and organization but also in thought. These three must be broken off together. What we speak of here as the area of "thought" includes both the poisonous thought left behind by the imperialists and the possible new poisonous elements. Against this new poisonous element we must increase our precautions while at the same time we sweep the house clean of what was left behind, getting rid of all the rubbish so that not a scrap remains.

In congratulating ourselves on our 20th anniversary we are also making a thorough examination of our past, and many dirty things have been revealed. These dirty things are not only contrary to Christian truth but much more are they far from the spirit of the New Age. The fact is that many of the publications of the NCCRE were edited by imperialist agents. They used this opportunity to put in as much as possible of 'Love America, Worship America, Religion Transcends Politics' and anti-Communist and anti-Soviet feudalist poison, to paralyse our thinking and extinguish our patriotism.

Now on one hand we have stopped the questionable publications to avoid giving poison to the Chinese Church. On the other hand we make a summing up of our preliminary examination and publish it in this issue for reference of Fellowship (NCCRE) members.

Editorial Note: (The Preparatory committee of the Resist-America Aid-Korea Three-self Movement has set up a Committee to censor all publications and afterwards they will make their final findings and publish the results.)

The poisonous thought spread by the imperialists is not only limited to our publications but is also deep in our brains. Some of the poisonous thinking has even sunk into our subconscious. These poisonous elements have directly and indirectly influenced all our words and deeds. This makes a very serious problem. For example, among us does all our thinking lean toward loving America and worshipping America? Do we think religion transcends politics? Have we doubts and fears that we might lose religious freedom under the leadership of the Communist party? Do we have keen concern to Resist America and Aid Korea? Do you admit that we Christians should contribute cannon and aeroplanes? Does the custom of leaning on America for subsidy make us lose our will to independence? Do we freely receive the good from the Government and not mutually try to support the public welfare? Do we distort our Bible teachings? Do we have narrow prejudices about the unity of the Church? Such poisonous thoughts are too many. If you have only one it is enough to prevent your development in the new life. We hope every Fellowship member will hold a

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thorough individual and group self-examination. Wash clean away all the poison. Amongst our Fellowship there are different degrees in the amount they have been poisoned but there is not one who can boast that he is an exception and has not even a speck. The more we sweep clean the more we can achieve in the New Life.

Jesus said, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire". If your right hand makes you to fall cut it off, it is better for you to enter into life maimed than having two hands to be cast into hell". What is the teaching from these words for us in cleaning our house?

Possibly some people may ask, 'Sweeping clean the house is good but what shall we do afterwards?' Now take the publications of the NCCRE. Although we recognize that there is very much poison in the publications, not suitable for our use, yet we have no new books to take their place. Will this not make a famine in textbooks? To this question we have given much thought but we ask you to be a little patient and note the steps in the work; do not expect to hurry it. It cannot be done with one kick.

Again, after we have swept out the house we do not want it to be vacant nor do we want to let the devil in; we want to house new people. We hope to be the masters of this new house but we do not know whether we are worthy.

Literature Denunciations.

Following the conference of Christian publishers with Government officials in Peking in April, plans were made for purging all Christian literature of every sort of imperialistic influence. Publishing agencies were asked to destroy stocks of books, and schools and seminaries were asked to remove from their libraries books that were guilty of a list of charges including the following: author a recognized traitor; direct or indirect opposition to Communism, Soviet Russia, or the People's Government; expressions of the imperialistic, capitalistic point of view; one-sided expressions of internationalism that harm the patriotic spirit; any depreciation of Chinese culture that might do harm to Chinese selfconfidence or self-respect; any imperialistic expression of the ecumenical Church which does not distinguish between friend and foe; any writing that expresses doubt of the Oppose-America, Help-Korea principle. It remains to be seen how far these principles will be applied in purging Christian literature.

A joint meeting of various Christian literature societies was held in Shanghai on August 4. Various speakers charged that Christian literature contained "imperialist poison" because (1) it is pro-American,(2) it is anti-Russian and anti-Communist,(3) it considers that religion should be "above politics",(4) it espouses Reformism, that is, the attempt to improve society without recognizing the fundamental factor, class conflict.

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A menacing finger is pointed at the publishing organizations which have not yet held denunciation meetings. The Seventh Day Adventists are denounced

for publishing articles on such subjects as "God's servants must be courageous". "What is the purpose", asks the editor of Tien Feng, "of such a sentence as 'In time of crisis God's servants must be faithful unto death'? Is it not to discredit the People's Government? We cannot permit this type of literature to continue."

One speaker, W. B. Djang, secretary of the Council of Christian Publishers, said, "The Christian Literature Society published biographies of over fifty great men. The greatest proportion of these were imperialistic capitalists, adventurers and evangelists. There were three biographies of Livingstone, the aggressor in Africa. Whether the literature be modernist or fundamentalist, spiritual or social gospel, conservative or liberal, in the publications of every organization there are not a few that have imperialist poison in them."

Another speaker is quoted as follows: "While some people were discussing my first self-examination and giving me suggestions, I felt that these colleagues were using this method to get rid of me ... If I don't examine myself and purge out these influences, it will be harmful to myself and to the ones who are near me. ... In 1935 I became editor of 'The Woman's Messenger'. It was filled with poisonous pro-American thoughts. It introduced American and British literature, and American and British home life. Although it was purely a religious magazine, it published an anti-Soviet and anti-Communist article by Z. K. Zia in September 1936, and another anti-Communist article, translated by imperialist request, entitled, 'Christians should not be Communists". ... When I look at the old copies of 'The Woman's Messenger' now, I feel much ashamed. I will be a new person, a good Christian and a good citizen, under the guidance of the Communist Party and the Committee to oppose-America, aid-Korea and carry out the Three-Self Reform of the Christian Church".

V.

STATEMENT TO THE HUNGARIAN CHURCH PRESS

The following statement has been sent to the Hungarian Church Press:

Certain statements which appear in the issue of the Hungarian Church Press dated October 1 give an erroneous impression of the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches held this summer in Rolle, Switzerland.

(1) The impression is given that Bishop Bereczky did not get a sufficient opportunity to express himself and that his statements have not been published as fully as those of other speakers. As a matter of fact special arrangements were made to enable Bishop Bereczky to make his full contribution to the meeting. In the press releases sent out from Rolle and in most of the articles

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published in various church papers more publicity was given to the Bishop's remarks than to those of any other speaker, speaking on the same subject. In the official public record of the meeting the address of Bishop Bereczky is the only one which is reported at length (Minutes and Reports Fourth Meeting Central Committee p. 33 to 35).

(2) The impression is given that the World Council of Churches has decided not to send an observer to the meetings of the World Peace Council but to send an observer to the meetings of the United Nations. The facts are that no new decision has been taken with regard to the United Nations. The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs has had consultative relationships with the United Nations for several years. The relationships with the World Peace Council also remain unchanged. The letter of the C.C.I.A. to Mr. Joliot Curie printed in the Ecumenical Review (July 1951) makes the position clear. Quite recently the C.C.I.A. has once again expressed its readiness to elucidate this position.

(3) The Hungarian Churchmen state that the "crisis" of the World Council consists in the fact that while it sees the realities, it does not struggle against injustice, oppression and exploitation. As a matter of fact the whole burden of the letter which the Executive Committee of the Council sent to the Churches in February of this year was to urge the Churches to take up that struggle. Moreover the Council has again and again called attention to particular injustices in different parts of the world and in different political camps. In certain recent cases which concern countries in which the Church is under pressure the Council has however refrained from speaking, since it did not want to put an additional burden on the Churches concerned and hoped that they would take the necessary action themselves.

(Signed) R.C. Mackie W.A. Visser 't Hooft

Note: The material for Background Information is prepared from reports received from correspondents.

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17 route de Malagnou, Geneva, Switzerland